



March 3, 2023

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, I'm submitting this testimony today on behalf of Mainers for Modern Elections in support of LD 812.

Mainers for Modern Elections is a coalition that is committed to ensuring that our right to vote safely transcends politics and partisanship. We advocate for safe, secure, modern elections. Our coalition is committed to securing equitable access to the ballot for every eligible Maine voter.

Coalition members include the ACLU of Maine, AARP of Maine, the Center for Secure and Modern Elections, Common Cause, Defend Our Health, Gateway Community Services, the League of Women Voters of Maine, the Maine AFL-CIO, Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, Maine Conservation Voters, Maine Education Association, Maine Equal Justice, Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition, Maine People's Alliance, Maine Service Employees Association-SEIU Local 1989, Maine Women's Lobby, Maine Youth Power, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and Represent Us.

LD 812 expands access to in-person absentee voting, and makes important reforms to advance ballot processing and notice of ballot envelope inspection that will improve election administration. Mainers for Modern Elections supports both of these efforts.

Expanding in-person absentee voting, particularly outside of standard business hours, is an important way to ensure more equitable access to voting. We support efforts such as this bill to ensure that working people and others unable to vote during business hours have more options to do so. Weekend voting is an important part of that effort.

Additionally, we strongly support the measures in LD 812 designed to improve election administration. Expanding the window for processing absentee ballots by an additional seven days will give local election officials extra flexibility in the days before an election, which may allow for services such as additional in-person absentee hours to be more readily offered. Setting the deadline to request inspection of absentee ballot envelopes to 5 PM the previous day will improve election officials' ability to plan and prepare in the crucial final days before an election. While these changes may seem minor, they are important steps to help support our hardworking election officials in their jobs.

LD 812 has the opportunity to expand access to voting while making important election administration reforms to streamline election officials' work. We urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 812.